

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 DRC-01 /127 W

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R 261240Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7772

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16745

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : PINS, PINT, TH

SUBJECT : REORGANIZATION OF THAI MILITARY

REF: BANGKOK 16622

1. SINCE THE FALL OF THE THANOM GOVERNMENT AND DEPARTURE OF FIELD MARSHALS THANOM AND PRAPHAT FROM BANGKOK, PRESS HAS CARRIED NUMEROUS STORIES INDICATING THAT RTG HAS ABOLISHED SUPREME COMMANDER POSITION, GENERAL KRIT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ROYAL THAI ARMY, IS REPORTED TO HAVE REFUSED APPOINTMENT AS SUPREME COMMANDER, AND AIR CHIEF MARSHAL DAWEE TOLD THE PRESS OCT 24 "ONLY THE KING CAN HOLD THIS POST" AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF ALL THAI MILITARY FORCES.

2. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONFIRMED ITS INTENTION TO "REVISE THE MILITARY STRUCTURE TO MAKE IT SUITED TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM" OUR SOURCES AGREE THAT NO SUBSTITUTE ORGANIZATION HAS YET BEEN DECIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT. INsofar AS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES REQUIRE, DAWEE IS ACTING AS SUPREME COMMANDER AS WELL AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE. GENERAL SURAKIJ, CHIEF OF STAFF SUPREME COMMAND, IS CONTINUING TO EXERCISE HIS OVERALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITY
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IN THAT POSITION WITHOUT REFERENCE TO HIS DESIGNATION AS

DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE;DAWEE AT OCT 24 PRESS CONFERENCE
CONFIRMED A CONTINUING ROLE FOR THIS "JOINT GENERAL STAFF."

3. WE EXPECT A RECOMMENDATION ON TOP LEVEL DEFENSE
STRUCTURE MAY GO TO CABINET SHORTLY BUT, GIVEN THE NUMBER
OF OTHER PROBLEMS FACED BY SANYA GOVERNMENT, DECISION
MAY BE CONSIDERABLY DELAYED AND EFFECTIVE DATE MAY BE AS
LATE AS OCTOBER 1, 1974, WHICH WOULD MARK BEGINNING OF
NEXT FISCAL YEAR AND RETIREMENT DATE FOR OFFICERS REACHING
AGE 60; MARSHAL DAWEE HAS ALREADY CITED THIS DATE AS TIME
WHEN HE PERSONALLY AND POST OF MINISTER OF DEFENSE WILL
REVERT TO CIVILIAN STATUS.

4. WE ARE TOLD THAT SUPREME COMMAND STAFF IS REVIEWING
US JCS STRUCTURE AS WELL AS BRITISH COMMONWEALTH COMMAND
SYSTEM AND CAMBODIAN MODEL. ALTHOUGH DAWEE AND OTHERS
DESCRIBE PROBABLE OUTCOME AS A "JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF,"
WE CONSIDER IT LIKELY THAT MILITARY SERVICES, WITH RTA
DOMINANT, WILL RETAIN SUBSTANTIAL AUTONOMY FROM CIVILIAN
MOD CONTROL IN WHATEVER ORGANIZATION IS FINALLY APPROVED.
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